

REMARKS

The Office Action of October 4, 2004 has been received and its contents carefully considered. In response, the present Amendment revises independent claims 1 and 9 to expressly recite that the output signal of a sampling circuit “is set to indicate an amount of skew” between first and second clocks.

Section 1 of the Office Action rejects independent claim 1 (along with several dependent claims) for anticipation by patent 6,014,042 to Nguyen. Among other features of Nguyen’s arrangement, the Office Action draws attention to Nguyen’s circuit 54.

The Nguyen reference is directed to a quadrature phase detector that minimizes inaccuracies due to variations in the power supply voltage and other factors. Nguyen’s circuit 54 is somewhat problematic because it does not appear to generate an output signal. However, the reference advises that Nguyen’s circuit 54 senses the voltages at a node N and a node P, and determines whether signals SIG1 and SIG2 are in phase quadrature, by comparing a differential voltage ($V_P - V_N$) to zero (see column 6 of the reference, lines 15-20). So regardless of whether Nguyen’s circuit 54 generates an output signal, it is clear that the reference neither discloses nor suggests a sampling circuit that generates an output signal “to indicate an amount of skew” between first and second clocks, as is currently recited in claim 1.

Section 2 of the Office Action rejects independent claims 1 and 9 (along with various dependent claims) for anticipation by patent 3,991,322 to Bush et al (which will hereafter be called simply “Bush”). The Office Action takes the position that Bush’s circuit 20 generates an output signal indicative of skew existing between first and second clocks (32, 34).

The Bush reference is directed to a circuit that receives an analog input signal and generates an output signal representing the input signal delayed in time. The signals on Bush's lines 32 and 34 are 180° out of phase with each other (see column 2 of the reference, lines 24-28), and Bush's circuit 20 generates a reconstructive signal 84 that represents a delayed version of the input signal (see column 2 of the reference, lines 36-46). Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Bush neither discloses nor suggests a sampling circuit that asserts an output signal indicative or skew, "wherein said output signal is set to indicate an amount of skew between said first and second clocks" as is currently recited in independent claim 1. Similarly, it is respectfully submitted that Bush neither discloses nor suggests a sampling circuit output signal that is "set to indicate an amount of skew between" first and second clocks, as is now recited in independent claim 9.

In summary, neither Nguyen nor Bush teaches a sampling circuit that generates an output signal indicating the amount of skew between first and second clocks. Nor would the references together have led an ordinarily skilled person to such an arrangement.

Since the remaining claims depend from the independent claims discussed above and recite additional limitations to further define the invention, they are patentable along with their independent claims and need not be further discussed.

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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AMENDMENT

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